

STANDING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended as a sample. Each parish will adapt them to fit their own situation. The guidelines are an important resource for the parish committees, especially the committee chairpersons. They clearly define the committee's responsibilities, manner of operation and expectations. The Committee Guidelines should be reviewed in conjunction with the parish council's review of their constitution and bylaws. Committee chairpersons ought to alert the parish council chairperson to any discrepancies or problems in the guidelines.

I. PURPOSE

Each standing committee implements the parish council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility, working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

II. SCOPE

All committees are accountable to the parish council. Committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish committee structure.

III. FUNCTIONS

The basic functions of each parish council standing committee are to:

1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
2. Establish priorities among needs and communicate these needs to the parish council, discerning with them which needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee or inter-parish collaboration might be effective.
3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
5. Submit the proposed programs to the parish council for support.

6. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
7. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
8. Maintain communication with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
9. Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
10. Determine budget priorities in the areas of the committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the parish council through the Finance Committee.
11. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.

In any case where any committee member interprets an action of a committee to be outside the limits of its responsibilities, that member shall present such interpretation to the parish council liaison or a parish council officer no later than the next meeting of the parish council and ask for reconsideration by the parish council. Pending reconsideration, the effect of the committee action shall be suspended.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. All committee members must be baptized, practicing Catholics and registered members of the parish. All members participate equally in decision-making.

(The pastor, with the approval of the council, may appoint a non-Catholic or non-parishioner to serve as an “expert” or advisor to a committee for a limited time. An advisor gives in-put to the committee but does not participate in the decision-making task of the committee. However, in the case of the School Education Committee, non-Catholic and/or non-parishioner school parents are eligible for membership on the committee. They participate fully in the decision-making and other work of the committee, according to the School Education Committee bylaws.)

2. Committee members need to be recruited actively and continuously by the committee itself and its subcommittees.
3. The term for committee members shall be one year. Annual membership lists shall be submitted to the parish council secretary.

4. Any committee member may resign by filing a written resignation with the committee chairperson.
5. At any regular meeting a member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the committee. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings with a good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a committee member.
6. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the committee chairperson. The parish council secretary shall be notified of the change.
7. Each new member is to be adequately prepared for membership on the committee by being provided with the opportunities for spiritual growth, appropriate theological foundation and the skills and information required for membership on the committee.
8. OPTIONAL: A young person at least 14 years of age but not yet 18 may be recruited annually to serve as a representative of the parish youth to the committee.

V. OFFICERS

The officers of each committee shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. Officers are selected annually by and from the committee based on their competence, leadership and knowledge of the committee's responsibilities. Offices are filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Ex officio members of the committee are ineligible to serve as committee officers.

The committee chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the committee and communicates these to the committee, parish council and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates the activities of the committee. Develops and maintains an annual committee calendar consistent with the parish council calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agendas and submits it to committee members at least 3 days before the meeting.

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4. Provides formation/education for committee members in its areas of responsibility, utilizing the parish staff and offerings on the district and archdiocesan levels.
5. Conducts meetings by assisting the committee members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus.
6. Facilitates the task of determining priorities and setting goals for programs and services to be developed within parish guidelines and archdiocesan structures and goals within the committee's areas of responsibility.
7. Monitors implementation of all committee decisions.
8. Establishes a budget based on committee objectives; and communicates budget information to the Finance Committee.
9. Forms ad hoc committees when necessary and appoints their chairpersons; makes appointments of subcommittee chairpersons; assigns individuals specific tasks; delegates responsibilities; and encourages cooperation both in and out of meetings.
10. Maintains committee membership roster and notifies the parish council secretary of any changes.
11. Is an ex officio member of all subcommittees of the committee.
12. Oversees recruitment and orientation of new committee members.
13. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the committee's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all committee materials to the new chairperson.
14. Performs duties consistent with the office as the parish council or committee may direct.

The committee vice-chairperson:

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson and is familiar with the parish structures, committee guidelines and activities, and consensus decision-making so as to provide continuity for the group.
2. Becomes chairperson in case of a vacancy.
3. Performs special tasks consistent with the office as assigned by the chairperson or the committee.

The committee secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the committee members, parish council, other committees and the parish.
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all committee members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc and subcommittee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.
4. Handles correspondence for the group, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
5. Performs duties consistent with the offices as the chairperson or committee may direct.

VI. MEETINGS

Regular committee meetings are held at such time, place and date as the parish council may designate. Each meeting consists of prayer/formation, decision-making and planning.

An agenda is prepared before the meeting by the chairperson, after appropriate consultation with other committee members, based on an understanding of the on-going needs and concerns of the parish within the scope of the committee's responsibilities. A written agenda is presented to committee members at least 3 days before each meeting.

Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, parish council chairperson, pastor, or a quorum of the committee. A quorum consists of a majority of the members. Notice of such meetings are given to all committee members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting, indicating its time, place and purpose. No business other than that stated as the purpose is conducted at that meeting.

Advance notice of the time and place of committee meetings is published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish are entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The committee chairperson may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the chairperson may announce.

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VII. MANNER OF DECISION-MAKING

Committees' manner of decision-making is communal discernment, which includes gathering of information, prayerful reflection and dialogue, leading to consensus.

VIII. SUBCOMMITTEES

The committee chairperson shall form subcommittees as needed. Each subcommittee shall have a chairperson or representative who represents the subcommittee at standing committee meetings. The initial task of each subcommittee is to delineate its responsibilities for review by the standing committee and parish council. Upon approval, the subcommittee must develop its own goals. Guidelines and operating procedures should be established if they are significantly different from the standing committee guidelines.

IX. REVISIONS OF GUIDELINES

These Standing Committee Guidelines may be revised by the parish council by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the parish council.

Date of Approval: _____

Date of Most Recent Revision: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____

COMMITTEE WORKSHEET

To be clear about who your committee is, what its responsibilities are, and how it accomplishes its work, answer the following questions.

1. The name of our committee is _____
2. The purpose and scope of our committee are (See description in the parish council bylaws).
3. This committee is accountable to
 - a. the parish council
 - b. another committee, namely _____
4. List the functions of this particular committee.
5. How many members (baptized, practicing and registered members of the parish) ideally serve on the committee? How long is a term of service? How does one resign or withdraw membership on a committee? How are vacancies filled? Can anyone be removed from a committee? How? Does the committee have any youth (age 14-18 years) members?
6. What kind of training or formation is offered to the committee members?
7. How does the parish budget support the work of this committee?
8. In addition to a committee chair, what other offices does the committee have?
9. What is the role of each officer?
10. How often does the committee meet? Where?
11. How does the committee make and communicate its' decisions?
12. With whom will the committee communicate on a regular basis? How?
13. Does the committee have any sub-committees? What authority/responsibilities do subcommittees have?
14. Are there any groups within the parish or community with whom the committee works?